

USDA Foreign Agricultural Service

# GAIN Report

Global Agricultural Information Network

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## Chile

**Post:** Santiago

### **Chile's Salmon Population Recovered from 2008 ISA Outbreak**

**Report Categories:**

Product Brief: Salmon

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**Report Highlights:**

**Chilean farmed salmon numbers rebounding after a 2008 Salmon Anemia outbreak devastated the population. Officials warn that recent population boom will bring its own consequences.**

**General Information:**

Three years since nearly being decimated by the spread of the Infectious Salmon Anemia (ISA) virus, Chile's salmon population has finally recovered its numbers, industry officials say.

According to the most recent data, salmon production —Chile's third-largest export—has increased by 44 percent since last year. The industry has yielded 420,000 tons of fish already in 2011, and officials estimate that figure will rise to 550,000 tons by the end of the year.

Chile has not seen this amount of production since 2006, when the nation's salmon industry peaked at 500,000 tons, putting it on a par with the leading global salmon producer, Norway.

In 2008 a strand of ISA hit Chile's coast, wiping out a large portion of the fish population and taking a substantial toll on the industry—21 fishing sites and two processing plants were closed as a result.

Industry insiders note that the rise in the salmon population is not without its negative consequences. Increased salmon production as the industry gains its strength has led to decreased international prices for the commodity. With the predicted increase in production coming from Chile, officials expect the low prices are here to stay.

Recent sanitary regulations in Chile, implemented to avoid future ISA outbreaks, will also be costly to implement and will likely impact profits, officials say.

Perhaps a broader ecological consequence of this boom in Chile's salmon industry, however, is the potential permanent biological impact of overfishing that officials warn will result if production exceeds the current rate.